

VA Regional Offices to Process Emergency Benefits Today; Up to \$3000 per Veteran for Housing and Textbooks

Washington, DC – Starting today, VA Regional Offices will be processing requests for college benefits afforded by the new GI Bill. Qualified veterans were able to apply for the new college benefits beginning in May of this year, and started receiving tuition benefits in August, along with housing and book stipends which are paid retroactively. Almost 300,000 claims have been submitted for the program. Unfortunately, thousands of veterans who applied for educational benefits under the program have not yet received their payments due to delayed processing. These emergency checks will help them make payments towards books and housing.

“I applaud the VA for acting quickly to provide these emergency checks to those who risk their lives to protect our country,” said Congressman Ryan. **“The benefits of higher education are invaluable, and I strongly encourage our veterans to take advantage of this program.”**

The checks for up to \$3,000 will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional offices across the country starting today. Students can go to one of the 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID, a course schedule and a certificate of eligibility to request payment of their housing and book allowance. Students can also apply online at www.va.gov or request free van service, provided by volunteers, to transport them to the nearest VA regional office. To obtain this service, veterans should call their nearest VA medical center and ask for the “Volunteer Transportation Coordinator.”

The distributed money will be deducted from future payments, which are expected to arrive on the normal schedule – the beginning of the month following the period for which they are being reimbursed. Veterans who apply for the emergency benefits online will receive their payments in the mail after processing.

A list of regional VA offices is available at: www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp. The

VA is also working with Veteran Services Organizations to send representatives to campuses with large veteran student bodies and to help students access the regional offices.

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